

# Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

## *Eliminating the Nuclear "Hot Seat"*

- Standard: I. Culture  
II. Time, Continuity, and Change  
III. People, Places, and Environments  
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions  
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society  
IX. Global Connections  
X. Civic Ideals and Practices
- Grade Level: 9–12 (homework research and simulation)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Use terms related to the conventions and protocols on biological and chemical weapons as part of the new U.S. policy
  - Participate in a simulation with their own questions related to these documents
  - Determine personally their most important question related to the history of these negotiations
  - Explain why strategic arms limitation is so difficult
- Time: 1 class period, plus homework or extra time if needed
- Materials: Documents: **1971** *Measure to Reduce the Risk of Nuclear War*  
**1975** *Convention on Biological Weapons*
- Exercises: *In the "Hot Seat"*
- Materials: Red fabric to cover a chair to make a "hot seat"  
Highlighters
- Access to the internet for research:
- <http://www.nuclearfiles.org/>
  - <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4718.htm>
- Procedures:

*Setting the Stage*

Nuclear weapons in the hands of the “wrong” country, error or malfunction, and misinterpretation of intent are always foreign policy concerns. In their negotiations over the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) in 1971, the United States and the Soviet Union came to an agreement on these types of issues. The document presented here includes a pledge on safeguards against accidental misuse, arrangements for notification in case of any risk, and a notification in case of an accidental missile launch. A second agreement was based on ways to improve the “hot line” between the two countries.

Simultaneously, the Nixon Administration was involved in protracted talks, under the auspices of the United Nations, on biological and chemical warfare restrictions to update the Geneva Protocol of 1925 (the subject of an earlier lesson in this series.) Little progress was made and it was up to President Gerald Ford to submit the ratification of the Geneva changes as well as the new Biological Weapons Convention to the Senate for approval. The Senate finally concurred in December 1975.

Students will be asked to read these documents, formulate questions about the situations (using correct terminology), and participate in a simulation about the nuclear “hot seat.”

*Pre-Lesson*

- 1.** Ask students to do some research on the web sites listed above as homework before the lesson.
- 2.** Wrap a chair in red fabric to make a “hot seat” and put it in the front of the classroom before students arrive.

*Day One*

- 1.** Tell students someone will be in the “hot seat” before the lesson is over.
- 2.** Hand out the two documents on nuclear weapons and disarmament and highlighters.
- 3.** Ask students to read the two documents and highlight information that would help them understand the terminology and differences in the “weapons” being presented.
- 4.** While they are reading and highlighting, hand out the exercise, *In the Hot Seat*.
- 5.** When they have finished reading, ask them to use their homework notes, the documents, and the *Hot Seat* exercise to create 20 questions related to the two documents. Students should use as many of the listed terms as possible in their questions. The goal is to create content and higher-level analysis questions.

- 6.** Students may write their questions on the back of the "hot seat" exercise. *Make note of who finishes first.*
- 7.** Ask the student who finishes first to stand. Immediately escort him/her to the "hot seat." (The student should bring his/her documents.)
- 8.** Then explain that the person in the hot seat will be the "target" of the students' questions. When the "hot seatee" fails to answer a question, the questioner will take his/her place. There are two objectives: to stay in the hot seat the longest and to get as many of one's 20 questions answered. Remind students to put a check mark by the ones that were asked and a star beside the ones that they think got really good responses.  
The teacher may (or may not) allow one "pass" in the question/answer responses.
- 9.** The teacher should record the number of questions each student is asked before being displaced from the hot seat; these points could be used for some reward, as could the check marks tallied on the list of questions.
- 10.** As the challenge ends, ask students to count the number of questions they had answered and then write that number above the "hot seat" on the front page.
- 11.** Also ask them to choose the most important question that they developed and then circle it. At the bottom of the page, have them explain why it is difficult for nations to agree to put a limit on strategic arms.
- 12.** The teacher can collect the papers and use the circled questions for further discussion and or activities. ■